

Application No. 09/931,370  
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**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims**

Claim 1 (currently amended):

A device for sealing a rotatable shaft and a fixed housing, said device comprising an annular stator and an annular rotor, said stator having a seal means for forming a seal with said housing, said rotor having a seal means for forming a seal with said shaft, said rotor and said stator each having contact faces, said device having a means for mechanically coupling said rotor to said stator and for permitting said rotor to move axially independently of said stator within a predetermined range of separation between said rotor and said stator within said mechanical coupling, and at least one magnet urging said rotor contact face to re-engage said stator contact face during said separation; and wherein said predetermined range of separation results in a magnetic re-engagement force no less than forty percent (40%) of the magnetic attractive force existing between said rotor and said stator when said faces are engaged.

Claim 2 (currently amended):

A device for sealing a rotatable shaft and a fixed housing, said device comprising an annular stator and an annular rotor, said stator having a seal means for forming a seal with said housing, said rotor having a seal means for forming a seal with said shaft, said rotor and said stator each having contact faces, said device having a means for mechanically coupling said stator and said rotor and for permitting said rotor to axially slide along said shaft within said mechanical coupling, and at least one magnet urging

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said rotor contact face to re-engage said stator contact face during said axial sliding of said rotor; and wherein said magnetic re-engagement force is no less than forty percent (40%) of the magnetic attractive force existing between said rotor and said stator when said faces are engaged.

Claim 3 (previously amended):

The device according to claim 1 where said means for mechanically coupling includes an interlocking flange and annular groove, said flange positioned on one of said rotor or said stator, said annular groove positioned on the other of said rotor or said stator.

Claim 4 (previously amended):

The device according to claim 3 where said annular groove is positioned on said stator and said flange is positioned on said rotor.

Claim 5 (previously amended):

The device according to claim 3 where said annular groove is positioned on said rotor and said flange is positioned on said stator.

Claim 6 (canceled).

Claim 7 (canceled).

Claim 8 (canceled).

Claim 9 (currently amended):

A device for sealing a rotatable shaft and a fixed housing, said device comprising an annular stator and an annular rotor, said stator having a seal means for forming a seal with said housing, said rotor having a seal means for forming a seal with said shaft, said rotor and said stator each having contact faces, said device having an annular groove

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positioned on one of said stator or said rotor, and a flange positioned on the other of said stator or said rotor, wherein said annular groove and said flange are engaged with one another to mechanically couple said rotor to said stator, and wherein said engagement establishes a predetermined distance within which said rotor may move axially independently of said stator, and at least one magnet urging said rotor contact face to re-engage said stator contact face during movement of said rotor; and wherein said predetermined distance results in a magnetic re-engagement force no less than forty percent (40%) of the magnetic attractive force existing between said rotor and said stator when said faces are engaged.

Claim 10 (original):

A device according to claim 1 having a plurality of magnets.

Claim 11 (original):

A device according to claim 3 wherein said flange and said annular groove have substantially complementary cross-sectional profiles.

Claim 12 (previously amended):

The device according claim 2, wherein said rotor slides along said shaft to accommodate unlimited axial shaft movement within said rotor.

Claim 13 (canceled).

Claim 14 (canceled).

Claim 15 (previously added):

The device according to claim 1, wherein said rotor is constructed substantially of a semi-flexible heat-resistant material.

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Claim 16 (previously added):

The device according to claim 2, wherein said rotor is constructed substantially of a semi-flexible heat-resistant material.

Claim 17 (previously added):

The device according to claim 1, wherein said means for mechanically coupling said rotor to said stator forms a labyrinth.

Claim 18 (previously added):

The device according to claim 2, wherein said means for mechanically coupling said rotor to said stator forms a labyrinth.